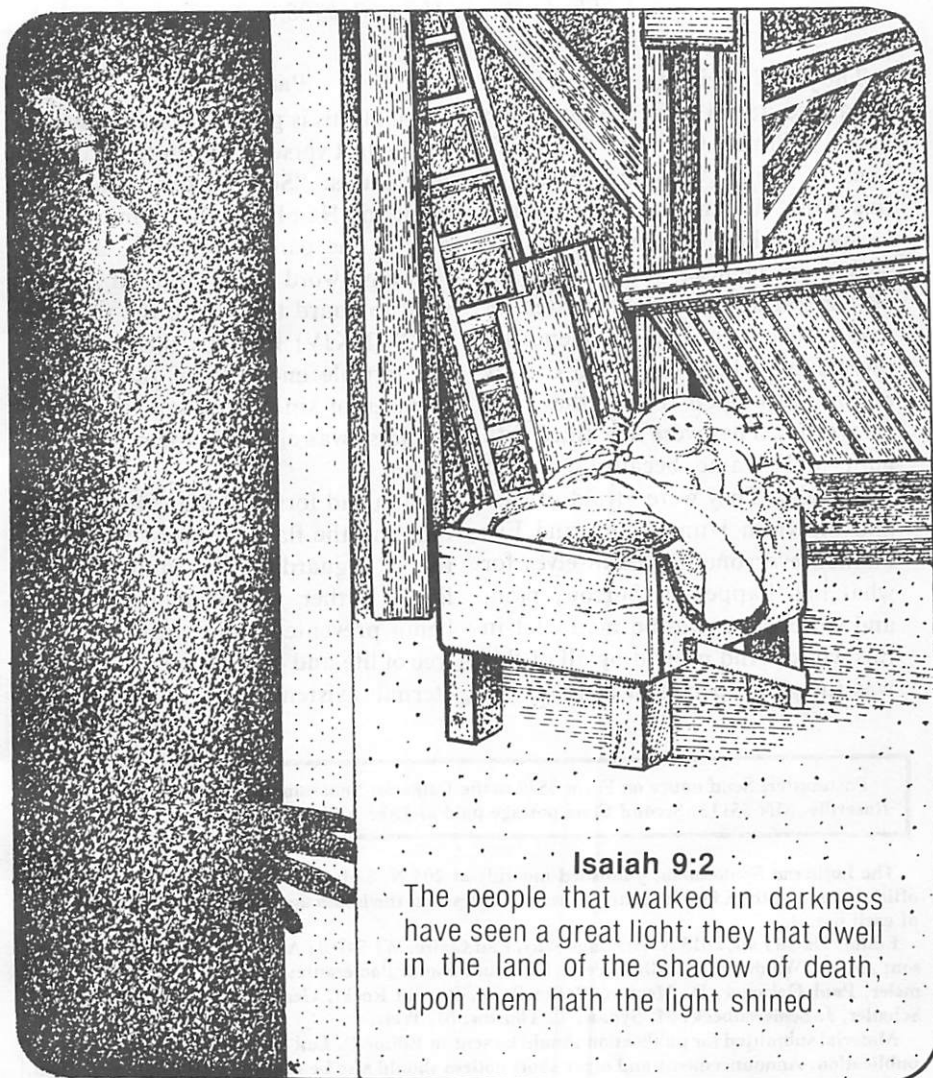


LUTHERAN

SPOKESMAN

December 1982
Vol. 25, No. 6
(ISSN 0024-7537)



Isaiah 9:2

The people that walked in darkness
have seen a great light: they that dwell
in the land of the shadow of death,
upon them hath the light shined.

CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION

Paradise Regained

**“He opens us again the door
Of Paradise today;
The angel guards the gate no more.
To God our thanks we pay.”**

(The Lutheran Hymnal: #105:8)

The joy of Christmas is reflected in the above stanza from the Christmas hymn, “Praise God the Lord, Ye Sons of Men.” This last stanza of this hymn, like the opening of John’s Gospel, takes us back to the beginning. Genesis 1-2 pictures the perfect Paradise God had created for man to live in and enjoy. Genesis 3 reveals that when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, they lost everything. They were now filled with guilt and shame because of their nakedness. They were afraid of God and hid from Him. Adam and Eve blamed everyone but themselves for what had happened. Sorrow, pain, and suffering would be man’s lot in this world. And overriding all of this was the grim specter of death.

Paradise Lost

All of this is graphically illustrated by the last verse of the third chapter of Genesis: “So God drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.” (NKJV) Perhaps this is when the terrible enormity of the consequences of sin hit Adam and Eve. Paradise was closed to them because of sin.

Man had forfeited life. The cherubim and the flaming sword were set there “to guard the way to the tree of life.” Luther spoke of man thus being prevented from eating of the tree of life and being sentenced to an eternal existence on this sin-filled

Postmaster: Send notice on Form 3579 to the Lutheran Spokesman, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113. Second Class postage paid at Lake Mills, IA 50450.

The Lutheran Spokesman, published monthly at 204 N. 2nd Ave., Lake Mills, IA 50450, is an official organ of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, the issues appearing during the first week of each month.

Editor: David Lau, 2015 N. Hastings Way, Eau Claire, WI 54701; Assistant Editor: Keith Olmanson; Artists: Waldemar Bernthal, Peter Gullerud, Randi Pomerantz; Staff: F. Archer, H. Duehlmeier, Paul Fleischer, D. Menton, Rollin Reim, Ronald Roehl, Gene Rutz, P. Schaller, W. V. Schaller, J. Schierenbeck, M. Sydow, T. Thurow, M. Wels.

Material submitted for publication should be sent to Editor D. Lau one month before the date of publication. Announcements and other short notices should also be sent directly to Editor D. Lau.

Business Manager: Benno Sydow, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113. Individual subscriptions: \$5.00 for one year; \$9.00 for two years; \$13.00 for three years. Subscriptions sent in bulk to congregations: \$4.00.

earth. It is also true that God was proclaiming to man that he had lost the way of life. The guard at the gate was a powerful reminder that Paradise was closed to man and life was lost. "Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever'—therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden" (Gen. 3:22-23—NKJV).

Christmas is the good news that God has done something about this sad situation. The promised Seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15) has come to crush the head of the serpent. Just as the cherubim guarded the gate of Eden 4,000 years before, so now angels announce the great, glad tidings of joy. The angel announces the birth of a special son to Mary and informs Joseph: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins" (Mt. 1:21). The angel choirs announce to the shepherds the birth of the Savior.

Restored Through Jesus

The coming of Jesus in human

flesh means that the angel guards the gate no more. Paradise is once more open to men. God has restored life to lost and fallen man. The one thing that kept man out of Paradise was his sinfulness. In the blood of Jesus God has washed away the sins of the world, reconciling the world to Himself.

"The way to the tree of life" is open to all, for Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn. 14:6). Jesus' resurrection is God's assurance that we shall live forever with Jesus in Paradise. The gate to God and life is open. Christmas is a message of hope because it is the message of life. "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (Jn. 1:4).

Let us see Christmas in terms of life and death, in terms of Paradise and life restored. All of this God gives us wrapped up in that holy Child whose birth we celebrate at Christmas.

**"He opens us again the door
Of Paradise today;
The angel guards the gate no more.
To God our thanks we pay."**

—J. Schierenbeck

PEACE WITH GOD

Have you ever felt that the troubles in your life have left you in a situation with no way out, with no place to go, and with no one to turn to?

Consider this. There was once an old and tired man who had seen a great deal of pain and trouble in his

life. His brother tried to kill him. His uncle tricked him into years of labor for unfair wages. His wives were jealous. He was often pursued by angry groups. He had to live by his wits or be destroyed. His favorite son was assumed to have been violently

killed. At one hundred and thirty years of age this man summed up his life with these words: "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been" (Gen. 47:9).

This man's name was Jacob. Though his life was full of wandering and trouble, he was a man of great faith who found a refuge and home in the promises of God.

Trouble Today

Many, many years have passed since Jacob's day. Yet it seems that nothing has changed. Pain and misery and trouble are the same today as it was since the fall of mankind into sin. We must, however, remember something else: God's love and mercy have also remained unchanged since the fall of man.

All too often we forget that "all things work together for good to them that love God" (Rom. 8:28). We despair too easily. All too often the troubles in our lives completely occupy our thoughts and make us forget the marvelous comfort that is ours. We feel trapped, hopeless, pushed up against a wall. We often feel that we have no place to go, no refuge. We couldn't be further from the truth.

Refuge in Jesus

Jesus' life and death did what no man could do—make peace with God for the countless sins of each and every one of us. Because of what Jesus did, God no longer looks on us as sinful enemies of His perfect holiness. Jesus paid the price of our sins with His blood and wiped clean the

record of our shortcomings. The doors to our eternal heavenly home are now open.

Having peace with God given to us as a free gift, we now have a place to go anytime we wish. The Bible—that wonderful guidebook—is the place to go to learn of all that has been done for you and given to you. In prayer we can speak freely to our loving Lord, lay all our burdens at His feet, and find blessed refuge for our soul. The church provides a refuge from the chaotic and violent world around us. And finally, when our lives come to a close, heaven stands open and ready for us as an eternal refuge of peace and joy.

Jesus' Invitation

"Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt. 11:28). "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (Jn. 6:37). "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (Jn. 14:2-3). "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1). "In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him: God is a refuge for us" (Ps. 62:7).

No place to go? Say rather that there is no place to go where God's love and mercy cannot sustain you!

—*Carey Pomerantz*

the **Brief Statement** *50 years*

Of Church and State

In the Old Testament there was no separation between church and state in the land of Israel. The church was the state, and the state was the church. The form of government was a theocracy. That is, God Himself was the lawgiver, ruler, and judge of His people. The kings, prophets, priests, and judges in Israel were expected to function as agents of the supreme Lord God of Israel.

There have been many in New Testament times who have tried to reestablish the theocracy that existed in Israel. We think of the papacy of the Middle Ages that tried to maintain supreme authority over both church and state. John Calvin's Geneva also tried to establish the church as an authority over the state, and this was imitated to some extent in our country by the early Puritans in Massachusetts.

But we Christians are not living any more in the Old Testament era. The promised Messiah has come. Now the church is not the state, and the state is not the church. Ac-

ording to the New Testament the duties of the state are "to execute wrath on him who practices evil" (Rom. 13:4—NKJV), to praise "those who do good" (1 Pet. 2:14—NKJV), and to maintain order in this world so "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence" (1 Tim. 2:2—NKJV).

On the other hand, the duty of the church is to preach the Gospel (Mk. 16:15). In carrying out this duty of preaching the Gospel we are forbidden from using earthly weapons such as physical force or economic boycotts (Jn. 18:36; 2 Cor. 10:4). We are to use what our Lord has given us: the power of the keys to open and close heaven according to His instructions (Jn. 20:23; 1 Cor. 5:13).

As Christians living on this earth we are members of the church and at the same time citizens of the state. Jesus' words therefore apply to us: "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mt. 22:21). Our duties to the government

include such things as paying taxes, obeying the laws, showing respect to the government over us together with its higher and lower officials, and praying for all those in authority over us. Obedience to government regulations is required of us even when we disagree with the wisdom of those regulations unless obedience to the government involves us in disobedience to God. "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

The *Brief Statement* of 1932 summarizes the Bible's teaching in this way: **"Church and State have entirely different aims. By the Church, God would save men. . . . By the State, God would maintain external order among men. It follows that the means which Church and State employ to gain their ends are entirely different. The Church may not employ any other means than the preaching of the Word of God. The State, on the other hand, makes laws bearing on civil matters and is empowered to employ for their execution also the sword and other corporal punishments."**

Our Precious Heritage

When the Holy Spirit enlightened Martin Luther on the one and only way of salvation, Jesus Christ, He also enlightened him on the distinction between church and state. The Roman Catholic Church of that time was almost entirely devoted to earthly concerns. It claimed to have the authority to punish criminals and heretics. In his customary boldness Luther charged: "Nowadays the

pope tends the sheep of Christ with sword, gun, and fire, and is worse than the Turk" (*Luther's Works*, Vol. 32, p. 88). But Luther maintained: "The burning of heretics is contrary to the will of the Holy Spirit" (*Luther's Works*, Vol. 32, p. 87). The church has not been granted the authority to punish anyone. This is the function of the state, not the church.

The *Augsburg Confession* of 1530 in Article XXVIII clearly pointed out the Scriptural distinction between church and state: "The two authorities, the spiritual and the temporal, are not to be mingled or confused." These precious paragraphs on church and state would be outstanding no matter when they were written. That they were written in that intolerant age is nothing short of miraculous. We do not claim, however, that Martin Luther and his associates were able to follow these Scriptural principles consistently. In the confusion of the time it was deemed necessary to ask government officials, as members of the church, to take over the leadership in the church. This was intended as an emergency measure only, but in time a permanent state-controlled church government developed in Germany and other predominantly Lutheran countries.

When many Lutherans were transplanted to the United States in the nineteenth century, Dr. C. F. Walther, leader of the Saxon immigrants, recognized that God was now for the first time giving the followers of Luther a golden op-

portunity to put into practice the principles of the separation of church and state that had been spelled out in the *Augsburg Confession*. "The church's independence of the state is not a defect or an abnormal condition, but the right and natural relation which ought always to obtain between church and state," said Walther in 1864. "According to God's Word church and state are two distinct kingdoms" (*The Form of a Christian Congregation*, CPH 1963, p. 6). Religious freedom was a reality in our country, and our Lutheran fathers thanked the Lord for this special blessing.

In 1947 the United States Supreme Court declared: "We have staked the very existence of our country on the faith that complete separation between the state and religion is best for the state and best for religion. . . . The First Amend-

ment has erected a wall of separation between church and state. That wall must be kept high and impregnable."

As followers of Jesus Christ, as confessional Lutherans, as American citizens, we have reason to thank our Lord every day for the blessing of religious freedom, and we have the duty to do what we can through prayer and testimony to maintain this freedom. There are many forces at work in our society, seeking to destroy this freedom. **"We condemn the policy of those who would have the power of the State employed 'in the interest of the Church' and who thus turn the Church into a secular dominion, as also of those who, aiming to govern the State by the Word of God, seek to turn the State into a Church"** (*Brief Statement of 1932*).

—D. Lau

EVANGELISM—Who?

This is now the sixth article in our series on Evangelism. We have touched upon the Where? of Evangelism (into all the world, beginning at home); the Why? (the desperate need of all sinners to hear the only-saving Gospel of Jesus Christ); and the What? (in three installments, detailing the bare essentials of our Gospel witness, the importance of purity of doctrine in our witnessing, and telling of what Christ has done for us personally and individually). It is still our intention to say some

things regarding the Who, When, and How of Evangelism, as well as some thoughts concerning the results of our evangelism efforts.

When it comes to the Who? of Evangelism it has already been pointed out that every Christian is a witness to Christ, is an evangelist in the broadest use of the term. This fact needs to be underscored. Jesus says of His disciples, "Ye *are* the salt of the earth" and "ye *are* the light of the world" (Matt. 5:13f). Speaking to His disciples Jesus said, "Ye shall *be*

witnesses unto Me" not "ye shall do witnessing." Christian witnessing, then, is not really something we *do*, it is something we *are*. The arm of the child of God does not have to be twisted to get him to be a witness of the Lord. He *is* a witness by virtue of the new life given him by the Spirit of God in holy baptism. When the child of God lives as the new creature in Christ that he is (II Cor. 5:17), his entire life in word and deed will testify to his Lord and Savior. And the result will be that others will be led to glorify our Father which is in heaven (Matt. 5:16).

Mistaken Ideas

The truth that every child of God, as such, is a witness to Christ is very basic and important and needs to be said and understood. But at the same time there is need and place for encouraging Christians to be the witnesses they are. This is so because Christians still have the old sinful flesh and blood which so often interferes.

One of the many things which can hinder Christian witnessing, as far as lay-people are concerned, is a mistaken idea of their role in Christ's Church. Consider these words: "Many people conceive of a ladder of dedication. At the top is the missionary, particularly the one who goes overseas. Just below comes the pastor. Then the professional religious worker. Finally down on the bottom rung is the lowly layman, sometimes looking as if he is barely on the ladder at all. The layman thus becomes a sort of also-ran Christian

whose chief function is to pay the bills for the pastor and fill up the pews for the public services of the church." ("The Layman as Witness," appearing in *Christianity Today* in 1968)

Do the lay-people in our congregations feel (or are they made to feel) like they are "also-ran Christians"? Do they feel (or are they made to feel) like they have done all that is expected of them if they attend church services and bring a weekly offering? As important as church attendance and contributions are, do our lay-people understand that their chief function as members of Christ's Church is that they are—should be—witnesses to the Lord in all they do and say?

Consider also: "The picture of the clergyman on the front lines, fighting the lonely battle for God, while the members in the rear send up supplies so their paid representatives can fight harder may appeal to the selfish, lazy, and materialistic inclinations in us, the members. It may also appeal to the pastor whose ego is gratified by his position of religious authority, prestige, and recognition. But it clearly does great injustice to the scriptural principles of Christian witnessing and the mobilization of the Church." ("The Layman as Witness")

Mobilization of the Church

A study of what the Bible has to say about the mobilization of the Church makes abundantly clear that there is no "select upper crust" of Christians under which are "lowly lay-people"

from whom God expects less by way of dedication, less by way of commitment to Christ, or less by way of witnessing to Him. There are no "also-ran" Christians.

When the Lord Jesus said, "Ye are witnesses of these things" (Lk. 24: 47), He was not talking only of His original twelve disciples, nor for that matter only of those who are called pastors and teachers in His Church. Those words included all of Jesus' disciples without exception. We see this carried through in a practical way in Acts 8:4: "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." The early Christian Church mobilized itself in such a way that when its members were persecuted for the faith, all of them, including the lay-people, witnessed to Christ wherever they went, boldly and eagerly, by both deed and word!

Peter was speaking of all Christians alike when he said, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light" (I Peter 2:9, NIV). It ought, then, to be clear that no child of God is doing his duty as a Christian if he leaves the matter of witnessing up to those who are the "paid representatives" of Christ's Church!

The Pastors' Role

The familiar words of Paul to the Ephesians give us further insight into the divine blueprint for mobilization of Christ's Church on earth: "He

(Christ) gave us some men to be apostles, some to speak the word, some to tell the good news, some to be pastors and teachers (. . . to what end? for what purpose?) in order to get His holy people ready to serve as workers and build the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:11f, AAT).

While our called pastors and teachers will surely be alert to opportunities they have to share the Gospel with non-members, that is not their chief calling! Our Lord's apostle teaches us that pastors and teachers are to concentrate their efforts on building up the faith of the members, so that they, in turn, will become ever-better witnesses to Christ out in the world. To that end, pastors will "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Tim. 4:2). To that end, a faithful pastor will "hold fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9).

Let the lay-members of our congregations thank the Lord from the bottom of their hearts if they have "paid representatives" who are intent upon faithfully equipping the believers for *their* work as Christ's ministers, Christ's servants, Christ's witnesses. Let the lay-members of our churches faithfully attend worship services, Bible Classes and other meetings where their called servants bring them the edifying, faith-strengthening, saving Word of God in the Gospel!

That church and that church body which carries on its Gospel work according to Christ's blueprint will be richly blessed. That church and that church body in which both pastors and lay-people realize and accept their respective roles as

Christ's servants will also become a blessing to many others in this world. May God graciously help us to be such a Church, to the honor and glory of the Savior's name!

—Paul Fleischer

THE DECATUR FREE CONFERENCE

An independent Lutheran congregation in Decatur, Indiana, invited persons from other independent congregations and from some of the smaller confessional Lutheran synods to participate in a free conference from Sept. 21-23, 1982.

The following six essays were presented: *Objective Justification*, by the Rev. Kenneth Miller, pastor of an independent congregation; *The History and Use of the Brief Statement in Lutheran Unity*, by the Rev. Sheldon Twenge, pastor and professor in the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation; *Romans 16: 17-18: Exegetical Theses*, by the Rev. Jeffrey Kinery, pastor of the host congregation; *A Catechism on the Church and the Ministry*, by the Rev. P. R. Bloedel of the Concordia Lutheran Conference; *Bible Critics Criticized*, by the Rev. Worley, filling in for the Rev. Richard Shekner, a pastor in the Illinois Lutheran Conference; *The Augsburg Confession: Its History, Evangelical Message and Light for Our Day*, by the Rev. Harold Vetter, a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

The five persons who attended as

observers from the Church of the Lutheran Confession appreciated the fact that the conference dealt with issues on which there is disagreement among conservative Lutherans and that there was a refraining from the practice of church fellowship on the part of the participants because of these doctrinal differences.

Our observers reported that the essay on Romans 16:17-18 was in substantial (although not in perfect) agreement with the doctrinal position of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, as spelled out in the pamphlet *Concerning Church Fellowship*.

The Church and Ministry Question

On the other hand, the essay on church and ministry took the position that the local congregation is the only divinely instituted form of the church on earth, and that the pastoral office is the only divinely instituted office in the church. This is definitely opposed to our confession as presented in the pamphlet *Concerning Church and Ministry*. There is no doubt that the church and ministry question has proved to

be one of the most divisive issues among conservative Lutheran groups. Our observers were happy to be able to distribute copies of our confession to those participants who asked for them. It is our prayer that the Holy Spirit will use our testimony based on the Word of God to bring about true unity. If and when complete agreement in doctrine is given by God through the Holy Scriptures, then we shall be happy to extend the hand of fellowship.

The twin issues of church fellowship and church and ministry were issues in controversy when our church body was formed in 1960. Before, during, and after the formation of the Church of the Lutheran Confession there was extensive debate and intensive study of the Scriptures pertaining to these doctrines. *Concerning Church and Ministry* and *Concerning Church Fellowship* emerged as our confessional statements as a result of that debate and study. The doctrine of objective justification also was discussed in those days in connection with the long-standing error of the American Lutheran Church. But no new document was drawn up on this article of faith at that time, since it was felt that the *Brief Statement* of 1932, to which our church body has subscribed from its beginning, very adequately summarizes the Bible doctrine in the words: "God has already declared the whole world to be righteous in Christ."

In the last few years, however, there has been increasing debate among Lutherans in the Missouri

Synod and the Wisconsin Synod on the right understanding of such passages as Romans 4:5, Romans 5:18-19, and Second Corinthians 5:19. It is therefore necessary for us all, and especially for pastors and teachers, to restudy these precious Scriptures that teach us that Jesus redeemed the world, that on the basis of this universal redemption God has *justified* the whole world of ungodly sinners, and that this universal justification of all sinners is received by the individual Christian through faith and through faith alone. On the other hand, "he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

The Original Text of the Bible

The essay on textual criticism (*Bible Critics Criticized*) delved into the question of the original Greek text of the New Testament together with the use of English Bible translations. One of the differences between the *King James Version* and the *New King James Version*, on the one hand, and the *New International Version* and *An American Translation*, on the other, is that they are based on slightly different Greek texts. Some textual critics favor the Greek text that was used as the basis for the King James Version, whereas other textual critics favor the Greek text that is the basis for the New International Version and most other modern translations. Certainly a careful study of this whole matter is in order among us also, lest we be led into error or overstatement on either side of the question.

The Decatur Free Conference was attended by many pastors of independent congregations who have been compelled by conscience to separate themselves from the false teachings and unionistic practices of the larger Lutheran synods. The following church bodies, besides our own, were also represented: the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the Concordia Lutheran Conference, the Evangelical Lutheran Federation, the Fellowship of

Lutheran Congregations, the Illinois Lutheran Conference, and the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation.

The above report is based almost entirely on the observations of Pastor Paul Tiefel, Jr., of Sister Lakes, Michigan, who was present for almost all of the sessions. His report was given to the Wisconsin Pastoral Conference of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, meeting at Eau Claire, Wisconsin, on October 13-15, 1982.

—D. Lau

THE MIDDLE GROUND—I

What do you think of when you hear the phrase “the middle ground” or “the firm middle ground?” You might be reminded of Solomon’s admonition, “Turn not to the right hand nor to the left” (Proverbs 4:27), which is a repetition of Moses’ command to the Children of Israel before they entered the promised land (Deuteronomy 5:32; 28:14). In that context the middle ground would be the message which the Lord has given us in the Bible, apart from which there is no salvation and no true happiness in this life.

Politics

In politics there is a middle ground between conservatism and fascism on the right side, and liberalism and communism on the left side. You might expect the two extremes (fascism and communism) to be miles apart in every area, but

you find they are both one-party, totalitarian systems. This seems to indicate that the two extremes tend to come together, as in a circle, even though they claim to be following different principles and working toward different goals.

Many, perhaps most, members of the Church of the Lutheran Confession tend to be politically conservative. This no doubt springs from the old “conservative work ethic” (based on Bible principles) according to which each person is expected to take care of himself and his own family, and not rely on the government for handouts. On a larger scale, the members of a community are expected to take care of the poor and needy in their midst, even without government programs. But human nature being what it is, and since not all citizens of this country (or any country) accept or

follow these principles, this ideal is never realized. That may explain why some staunch Christians are more politically liberal, believing that the government must institute and maintain certain social welfare programs, because the citizens are lax in taking care of these needs on their own. We have no absolute Scriptural basis for criticizing such a political stand or questioning the faith of its adherents.

Religion

In religion there are also shades and extremes to the right and left of center. The names vary. Some who are called liberals call themselves progressives; others who are called conservatives call themselves moderates. And of course a conservative in the eyes of the extreme liberal may be a liberal in the eyes of the extreme conservative.

Most of us in the CLC probably think of ourselves as being to the right of center on a scale of religious liberalism to conservatism. Some have gone so far as to call the CLC "ultra-conservative." We do not object to that label if it refers to our determination to stick to God's Word in all things, and not add to it or subtract from it. But if people think of religious conservatism as an extreme or radical position, a going

beyond God's Word in establishing and enforcing rules and regulations for living, an exclusivism, isolationism, or religious bigotry, then we reject the name "conservative."

The Middle Ground

The purpose of this series of articles will be to demonstrate that, on many of the issues that face us every day, the Word of God does not present an extreme or radical position. On the contrary, it presents a position that is in the middle, between two extremes.

Not that it really matters to the true child of God whether God's Word is to the right or to the left of other positions. The believer will bow to and follow God's Word regardless. And we will admit that the doctrines of sin and grace, and many other Scriptural teachings are "extreme" in the sense that they are far beyond the ability of man's feeble mind to grasp. But when it comes to the Christian's day-to-day living in this sinful world, it may help us in our own faith-life, and thus also in speaking to others of the hope that is in us, to know that we are not "way out in left field" (or right field) somewhere, but are standing on the firm middle ground of God's Word.

—Gene Rutz

Twenty Years In Sister Lakes

On August 29, 1982, Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church, Sister Lakes, Michigan, held a special

worship service commemorating twenty years of existence. In September of 1962 a handful of con-



Interior of Redeemer's Church Building

cerned Lutherans from Dowagiac inquired about the Church of the Lutheran Confession from Pastor Ralph Schaller, who was then serving Faith congregation in Coloma. This small group called Pastor Schaller on a part-time basis and began holding services. Incorporation followed in early 1963, and later a move to the Sister Lakes area.

After years of renting different places for worship the Lord guided them in 1967 in the purchase of a bankrupt lumber company. The congregation modified the 25 x 40 office building into a chapel and began tearing down the lumber shed to provide materials for a new church building. The cornerstone of the 32 x 88 building was laid in 1972, although it took many years to complete the building project.

In 1973 Redeemer congregation

requested status as a mission congregation in the CLC so that they might be able to call a full-time missionary. Since then the congregation has remodeled the office building into a parsonage and added a 20 x 40 addition to the church. Presently a 15 x 25 addition is being added to the parsonage. The congregation has grown to over 100 souls with many children. The Lord has showered abundant blessings upon Redeemer congregation—material, numerical, and, above all, spiritual blessings.

The Anniversary Service

The anniversary service focused on this grace of God in Christ Jesus. We were reminded of the precious bond of fellowship as a group of fifteen traveled from our sister congregation in Saginaw and over twenty-five from



Redeemer Congregation at Twentieth Anniversary

Faith of Coloma to make up part of the 109 gathered in thanks and worship.

The three congregations invited their respective adult and youth choirs to praise our God with a jubilant rendition of "Christ Is Our Cornerstone" under the direction of Pastor James Sandeen of Coloma. Pastor David Schierenbeck of Saginaw was the guest preacher. On the basis of Psalm 78:7 he reminded the members of Redeemer of our anniversary goals: 1) to sing the praises

of the Lord; 2) to help our children appreciate the wonderful works of the Lord.

The worship service was followed by a dinner and a short presentation of Redeemer's history as remembered by slides, pictures, and one of the founding members, Harold Garrett.

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power" (Rev. 4:11a).

—Paul Tiefel, Jr.

Devotional Readings For January 1983

January	Scripture	Theme	Hymn
1	Philippians 3:7-14	Leaving behind . . . reaching forward	120
2	John 14:1-6	Safe with Him	216
3	Psalm 90:1-12	Lord, teach us	400
4	Luke 12:15-26	Rich toward God	423

Appointment

Professor Robert Dommer has not found it possible to fulfill his responsibilities on the editorial staff of the *Journal of Theology*. His resignation has been accepted. Pastor Paul Fleischer has been appointed to the position formerly held by Professor Dommer.

—Daniel Fleischer, President

Mr. and Mrs. Duane McCallum
Chamberlain Basin Outfitters
A1r Star Route
Cascade, ID 83611

5	Psalm 51:10-12	Restore the joy	96
6	Matthew 2:1-12	The Gentiles' Christmas	127
7	Isaiah 60:1-6	Thy Light is come	126
8	James 1:22-27	Hear and guard	16
9	Luke 2:25-32	Our eyes have seen	137
10	Galatians 4:1-5	Now is the time	99
11	Luke 2:25-35	Cradle and cross	354
12	Isaiah 9:6	Still true!	78
13	1 Corinthians 1:18-24	Wisdom and strength	433
14	Galatians 4:6-7	Because we're sons	21
15	Luke 2:41-52	As His custom was	2
16	Ephesians 2:1-9	Nothing in my hand	376
17	Ephesians 6:10-17	God's armor	262:2
18	Psalm 23	All the days of my life	431
19	1 John 1:3-4	That we should see Thy face	138
20	1 Corinthians 2:1-10	Only Jesus	348
21	Psalm 51:1-10	My sin ever before me	378
22	2 Peter 3:10-14	The day of the Lord	612
23	1 Corinthians 13:1-7	Though I speak	442:5
24	John 15:1-9	Every branch in Me	342
25	Galatians 6:14-18	Is not puffed up	175
26	John 15:9-13	Greater love has no one	362
27	1 Peter 2:19-23	If you suffer	171:11
28	Matthew 22:34-40	Love without measure	419
29	Luke 18:9-14	God, be merciful	323
30	1 Corinthians 9:19-23	Servant unto all	464
31	Matthew 18:21-22	Forgive until . . .	458:6